

Konferenzberichte

Workshop "Values and Democracy"

Pattaya (Thailand), 13. - 16.10.1989

The c. 20 participants who attended the workshop came from 8 different countries, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the USA and the Federal Republic of Germany. This relatively small number (consisting of politicians and academics) facilitated intensive discussion of the topics under question.

The workshop was organized by the Strategic and Security Studies Unit, University of Kebangsaan, Malaysia and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (Singapore Office) and co-hosted by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

Norma Mahmood, University of Kebangsaan, Malaysia, *spiritus rector* of the workshop, furnished the authors of the papers with a set of resourceful questions. Zakaria Hj Ahmad extended this catalogue of questions in his opening remarks, seconded by Wolfgang Sachsenroeder, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Singapore Office, who emphasized the historic significance of "the right idea at the right time".

Seven country studies discussed aspects of national culture, values, interpretation of democracy and problems of their respective political systems on the basis of the parameters given by Norma Mahmood, W. Sachsenroeder and Zakaria Hj Ahmad.

This procedure allowed representation and analysis of national peculiarities, historical classification and comparison. Theoretical elaborations of academics became more understandable thanks to the practical contributions of the politicians. Some of them have a reputation in two fields, for example Chai-Anan Samudvanija, who belongs to the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, and is also a senator in the Thai Parliament.

Some of the leading questions of the workshop were:

- How do values arise and develop?
- Who subscribes to which values?

- Who uses values in the changing political system?
- How do values change?

These questions led to the characterisation of the values into:

- individual ones,
- national ones,
- border-crossing ones,
- Islamic-influenced values and interpretations of democracy in South East Asia,
- Confucian values and a paternalistic system: for instance Korea.

If particular 'Asian' values exist, can they be adequately interpreted and understood with 'Western' concepts (approaches of Almond, Pye, Verba, Weber etc.)? Or, to go one step further, can the 'Western' concept of 'Westminster Democracy' be compatible with 'Asian' values at all?

Alexander R. Magno, University of the Philippines, and Dr. Khong Cho Oon, National University of Singapore, concentrated especially on these questions in their papers. Khong spoke on 'Democratic concerns within a deterministic culture'.

In view of the ever increasing contact between the two continents it is one of the major concerns of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Asia to promote the regional exchange of ideas and make encounters between Europeans and Asians possible. Therefore, papers on Korea and the Federal Republic of Germany were an integral part of the programme of this workshop.

Martin Gralher, Professor and liberal local government politician assessed European intellectual history with regard to values and democracy placing special emphasis on the discussion of values in Germany. The open forum after his presentation focussed on changing attitudes towards authority in Germany.

In his comparative summary of the workshop Larry Diamond from the Hoover Institution took up the initial questions of the conference and managed superbly to illustrate differences and mutual points of views of the participants.

Prior to the workshop two publishers already indicated their interest in the revised manuscripts. Proceedings should be published in 1990.

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